American Hibiscus Society

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to the Chapters and members who have contributed material for this our first issue of the Bulletin. Starting as of this issue there will be a hibiscus bulletin published every three months.
I know it will tend to widen our paths and generate enthusiasm.
Let us strive to make the coming years a great success. Remember the American Hibiscus Society is here to be of service to you. If you have hibiscus problems, write us about them, if we know the answers, we will be glad to help you.

W. Bruce Parnell

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HIBISCUS ROSA SINENSIS, single red variety, represents a typical fast growing, profuse blooming, woody ornamental.
A good plant for experiment to record the specific effects of nutrients. It is well known that small changes in the major nutrients ; Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium can cause large variations in size, color and bloom in an otherwise normal plant.

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MULCHING

Claude Davis, retired LSU Horticulturist, of Baton Rouge, La. believes that the hibiscus is an herbaceous perenial in La. It is a native of the tropics, and in those climes it is definitely a perenial. and a woody one at that.
However La. climate is not tropical, they have freezes every winter, and some years the temperture drops into the lower twenties.
Hibiscus cannot take those severe cold spells. In severe cold hibiscus tops die down. If it is only a moderate freeze only the tops die down, if it is more severe, the whole plant dies.
Mr. Davis contends that mulch should be applied before the cold spell hits.
He believes that when that proceedure is used, the cold may kill the tops but the roots are much more likely to be saved. And if the root is saved the plant is saved.
Mr. Davis mulches his Hibiscus about the middle of October. He advocates the use of bagasse for the Job. Bagasse is the pulp of sugar cane after the juice has been extracted at the sugar mill. It is sold by the bale and is not expensive. Be generous in its use, about a half bale to each plant, other material may be used.
Some people use leaves, which is alright, except leaves wont pack as securely as bagasse and therefore don't provide the same insulation. If there are large air pockets in the mulch, the cold can penetrate more easily.
Once plants are so mulched just wait. If the winter is mild the tops never die. When a killing freeze arrives use a pruning knife or shears and cut the tops back beneath the level of the mulch.
In the spring, hibiscus naturally start growing again. If the tops were cut back, then it is necessary to pull the mulch back along in April. It is not a good thing to remove the mulch too early.
Some of you may wonder what happens to the bagasse in the spring. Should it be removed, and if so,